

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 2532 without my signature.

A number of well-intentioned mandates have been placed upon California hospitals in recent years, including nurse-to-patient staffing ratios and seismic retrofit requirements. Hospitals will be spending billions of dollars in the coming years in order to comply with these mandates. As such, I believe we must carefully weigh additional mandates on hospitals in order to ensure the financial burden does not become too great or interfere with their ability to offer quality health care.

Because I am concerned about the financial burden hospitals are already under, I cannot support the costly mandate imposed on them by AB 2532. Although the goal of having all hospitals implement a standardized lift policy that includes lift teams and modern equipment is laudable, it need not be mandated in statute. Procedures to limit injuries caused by the lifting patients should already be a part of a hospital's mandatory Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP). If an individual believes a hospital's IIPP is insufficient, they may file a claim with the Division of Occupational Safety and Health. I believe this existing statutory protection and the accompanying workplace safety standards adopted by the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board are sufficient to protect health care workers from injury.

Although I cannot support AB 2532, I encourage hospitals to review their lift policies to determine the extent to which they can develop lift teams and purchase machinery to assist in lifting patients. I also encourage hospitals to consider incorporating modern lift technologies into new construction and significant renovation projects, including their seismic retrofit activities.

For these reasons I am returning this bill without my signature.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger